

Williams Laughs in the Face of Justice

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On Thursday July 16th, Amity's former Town Manager Darrell Williams was again in court for his latest hearing. With the Houlton Courthouse renovations nearly finished, the court sessions are held upstairs in the same room of Williams' first court date. The stairwell was lined with people and the small upper waiting area was standing room only when Williams arrived, smiling and looking confident.

A look which quickly faded as someone on the stairs spoke out, "Hello Darrell, I think there's some folks up there waiting for you." Looking up, Williams' saw the faces of several Amity residents looking down at him. Present for the session was Arthur Hall, Odel Fields, Hollis Seamans, Eli Werber and his friend Daniel.

With only a few cases to dispose of, Judge E. Allen Hunter was soon ready for Williams' case. By then, only two or three other people were left in the courtroom; so the residents of Amity were plainly visible.

Just before the case was to come up, Williams' lawyer, Tory Sylvester, came over to Victims Advocate Becky Miller to ask if any of the officials from Amity were present. Miller turned and asked Werber if there were any. Unfortunately, none of our town's elected representatives were present so Werber suggested that Miller call Margaret Frye, Amity's present Town Manager. Frye referred the caller from the Court to Selectman Pat Miller.

It seems that Williams had just remembered a \$15,000 Performance Bond from the F. A. Peabody Company in Houlton. Williams claimed the Town had been paid that money. Therefore, if the Town had gotten that money, it should be taken out of the amount of restitution Williams' has to repay the Town.

Williams' lawyer requested another continuance to look into this matter and a couple of other things. In a rather dramatic oration, complete with arm waving, Sylvester stated that he and the District Attorney are deep in negotiations for a plea agreement and have nearly reached an agreement and could have it resolved soon. He stated that Williams would be willing to repay the full amount in exchange for pleading guilty to a lesser charge.

Sylvester also asked the Amity citizen's petition not be taken into consideration on this request for a continuance; since it had just come across his desk today; he had not had a chance to look it over. He stated this petition had no bearing on what was being done today. Williams had a very smug look on his face as Sylvester continued his spiel. Judge Hunter asked the Victims Advocate just when the citizen's petition had come to her office and Miller responded, "Last Friday I believe, your Honor," She then turned to Werber asking what day he had delivered it to her. Werber replied that he had brought it to her the previous Friday.

Sylvester said his client was willing to reimburse the Town a significant amount by the end of the summer, but here it is only the beginning. "Perhaps if the court would set another date in the future," Sylvester said thrusting an arm out dramatically, "Say, hopefully, the September docket, if it ever gets here."

Then, a sudden peal of loud laughter rang out Williams' mouth and across the courtroom; leaving spectators looking dumbfounded and Judge Hunter with a very angry expression. With a quick ruffling of his papers, Hunter reminded Williams and Sylvester that at their March court date they had agreed to have the full amount repaid by July. Sylvester again claimed to be in close negotiations with the District Attorney's office could have it resolved very soon. ADA Gordon did not appear to be in agreement with Sylvester's assessment of their negotiations.

Judge Hunter agreed to the continuance to look into the insurance bond and to look further into "what appears to be an

emotional appeal from the citizens of Amity." He offered a docket date of August 10th which brought ADA Gordon to his feet protesting this had gone on long enough. Judge Hunter asked if the DA's office was ready to proceed. Gordon stated he, as well as the concerned citizens of Amity, were ready and eager to proceed. Gordon asked for the case to be put on the July 29th docket and Judge Hunter agreed. Judge Hunter sternly told Williams and Sylvester that the 29th was it, he would not entertain any plea agreement attempt after that date.

Victim's Advocate Becky Miller then asked the Amity residents to meet with her in her office downstairs to discuss the Judge Hunter's ruling. Miller said the insurance bond was really only for \$8,000 and the town had not been paid. Arthur Hall said he had been informed that the town could not get any money until Williams had been found guilty. Miller explained that on the 29th Williams is to appear and either plead guilty or not guilty, and then go to trial if necessary. Any plea deal will have to be completed by the 29th and there is no chance of one after that date.

As the Amity residents left Miller's office after thanking her for her help, she said, " I think your petition has made a difference and made the Judge take notice. I think the State did good today."

Advocate Miller also said that, if Williams is found guilty, the residents of Amity can come in and make a Victim's Impact Statement. In it you state how this crime has affected you and your life. Miller chuckled as she said to the men, "Keep it clean and not too emotional, just stick to the facts." But at least we can have our say!

Amity Matters will keep you updated as more information concerning the Victim's Impact Statement is received from Advocate Miller.